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Reflections: The 50th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

by Rev. Lily Chang



Rev. Chang, Mrs. Phoebe Griswold, and other delegates pose together

The 50th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) was held from the 27th of February through to the 10th of March, 2006. This meeting hosted thousands of women from around the globe, who came together to discuss the challenges women and families will face in the 21st Century. Among all the NGO delegations, the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) with the number of 92 women was the biggest delegation present at the United Nations. Based on The Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals, the main theme of this meeting emphasized creating an environment that could facilitate gender equality, to achieve women's equal participation in the decision-making process at any level in education, health, and the work place. These 92 female representatives of the Anglican Consultative Council were coming from 38 provinces worldwide and the Episcopal Church USA. It was my honor to be invited by Mrs. Phoebe Griswold, the wife of presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church USA, to

attend this meeting, which helped me further realize the value and abundance of the Anglican spirit. Therefore, I would like to share with you what I learned from this trip:

First of all, worldwide meetings (that is meetings that gather people from all across the globe) always brighten people's eyes, and so did this meeting. Through briefings, topic discussions, and workshops, we had the opportunity to understand the various issues and situations women face all around the world. Women whose stories that had, up to that point, only been told in

books and news reports appeared in front of us,

quite real and in the flesh this time, to tell us their experiences and stories. For example, we heard of the polygamy in Muslim countries that made teenage girls be sold as concubines by their fathers. During meetings at nights, women from Jerusalem told us how the Holy Land suffered due to political and religious reasons. These touching stories remind us to care not only about ourselves, but the sufferings of others. We cannot isolate ourselves from the world; we are part of the world.

Secondly, I want to thank AWE (the Anglican Women's Empowerment group) that convened the Anglican women to attend this meeting. Three years ago, this group saw that the church should not only live in a circle of itself, but needed to play an active part in the world. Therefore, under the invitation of Mrs. Phoebe Griswold, the number of provinces that attended this UN meeting increased from 11 provinces in 2004, to 27 provinces in 2005, and further to

(cont'd. on p. 6)



The Bishop's Message:

A reflection on Christ's "Passion" and "Resurrection"

by the Rt. Rev. David J.H. Lai, Bishop of Taiwan



Dear brothers and sisters in Lord, Peace be with you!

For every Christian, the days of Holy Week (also called "Passion Week") are the days most worthy to be remembered and for which we are most thankful. During this highest celebration on the Christian calendar we commemorate what Jesus Christ taught us in that week; we remember how He suffered in body, mind, and spirit before He walked to the cross, and we recall that he did all of this in order to purify and forgive the sins of the world with His most precious Body and Blood.

We are thankful that Christ died on the cross not only to declare His obedience to the heavenly Father, but also to show His love in action to the world. His death on the cross opened the gate of faith so that the stream of love could overflow every desperate sinner, making them His sons and daughters. Following His words we become his disciples. Humbling ourselves, putting our trust in Him, we are able to look up at His grace and carry His yoke willingly, and receive the abundantly life in Christ. Therefore, we can say firmly that: There is no salvation other than in Christ.

Jesus commanded us to love one another as he had loved us before his martyrdom. Christ taught us how to fulfill the words "Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) when He died on the cross for the world. Today every place in the world is filled with joy and peace, and more constant, warmth and progress, just because of "Peoples' loving one another".

There are people in every generation living in darkness and pain with their hearts bound by sin and Satan. Especially in the 21st Century, when realistic and utilitarian computer technology assumes the leadership and human relationship are far more cold and detached, it is every Christian's obligation to shine through the Lord and light up the path of truth and life, so those who are on the rim of depression and despair may follow the light of hope to live a life of getting closer to God and have their life renewed by God's grace.

Also, the children of God need to live out a witness by loving one another to rid society of misunderstanding, opposition, jealousy, hatred; and smooth the wounds and bring reconciliation to the broken hearts and relationship of tribes and parties.

Since Christ had given us a good example of

suffering, we will surely experience the secret of the Passion if we are willing to offer our gifts and talents in the fullness and guidance of the Holy Spirit. And, with our own suffering, contribute to a society with holiness, righteousness, peace, joy, progress and stability. Then, we may soon complete the great commission and glorify God and benefit all people.

If Christ only died for the sins of the world on the cross, but was never resurrected, there would not be over 2.6 billion people all over the world singing praises from the bottom of their hearts that "the Lord is risen" and shouting victoriously that Christ has overcome the dominion of death and evil. He has given us, whose sins are forgiven, the evidence of eternal life. From now on, we, who are connected closely to the resurrected Lord, will be strengthened by Him to overcome the world, and shine through the Lord living a life of holiness, righteousness, faith, hope and love. This life will be evidenced by bearing the fruits of the Holy Spirit to glorify God and benefit people.

In our life, every one likes the circumstance, atmosphere and flavor of victory and cherishes it a lot. We shout for joy with honor to the successful athletes on the field, the winner of a difficult exploration contest, the brave fireguard in a disaster, the detective striking crimes, and the gospel warrior rescuing men's souls.

Though victory can mean harvest through defeating enemies and can show the value and account of life, victory is only transient. It slips away and turns into a record of history right after people have tasted the flavor of it. We all know that nobody can stand on the champion's stand forever, for the victor of the next contest is coming to stand on it.

The resurrected Christ is the victor who overcomes death and evil, and the victory and triumph of His resurrection is not just for a time, but forever. It proves that Jesus is Lord of the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). He is the Holy Son of the ever living God. He is the light of the world, whoever follows Him will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. (John 8:12)

(cont'd on p. 3)

*"We all know that
nobody can stand on the
champion's stand
forever..."*

("Bishop's Message" cont'd. from p. 2)

According to what the Apostle Paul described, Christians saved by grace are led by God in triumphal procession in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14). What's the difference between triumph in Christ and in the civil world? Victors of the world are happy with their own accomplishments. But Christians are disciples and children whose sins are forgiven and justified through faith. They are filled with the Holy Spirit and rejoice for being missionaries of gospel and builders of God's kingdom. And this joy is even more precious because no other thing or circumstance can separate us with our triumph in Christ from His love.

The grace we have in all sins being forgiven and in being rescued through Christ's redemption is not because of our good deeds, perfection, worldly identity, status, knowledge, nationality, fortune or denomination, but because we confess with our

"...no other thing...can separate us with our triumph in Christ..."

mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead, and we will be saved. (Romans 10:9) When we put our trust in Christ and follow His teachings, we will surely witness with our renewed life that we conquer all evils, temptations, allurements, and the threat and fear of death because

of the secret of Lord's resurrection, and of His authority and might, that we may have joy and peace every day. Therefore, we may lead and encourage friends, colleagues, neighbors around us, especially those contemporaries who are desperate

and lost in finding grace and mercy, full of depression and pain, to show them a glimpse of hope, truth and life. Then, through their faith in confessing sins, humbling themselves, being obedient, and accepting salvation of the resurrected Christ, we may together conquer and triumph with new life full of peace and joy, and give thanks and shout for joy to the Lord

75th General Convention Preview

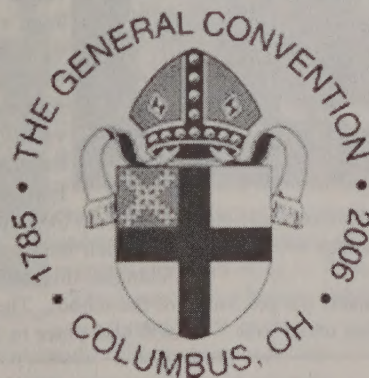
This year the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, USA will take place in Columbus, Ohio USA. The Convention begins on Monday, June 12, 2006 and will conclude on Wednesday, June 21, 2006. The theme for this year's convention is "Come and Grow." Of important note is the election of a new Presiding Bishop. Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold will retire from his position and the 26th Presiding Bishop will take office on November 4, 2006. For more details about the convention, agenda items, and what will be voted on, please go to www.episcopalchurch.org.

General Convention meets once every triennium (three years) and is a large gathering consisting of deputies, bishops, visitors and friends from around the world to "consider the state of the church and its work in the world." As the National Church described

in 2003, "A significant amount of legislative activity takes place during the convention, but it is the Church gathered for conversation, prayer, worship, thoughtful deliberation and the sharing of views and concerns that makes this extraordinary gathering so powerful and important."

Bishop David Lai and his wife, Lilly, will be in attendance for this momentous occasion. For our Diocese, Reverend Lennon Chang

and Mrs. Hannah Chang have been selected to serve as delegates on behalf of the Taiwan Diocese. Others that will be representing the Diocese of Taiwan at General Convention as visitors and observers include Mr. Paul Lai, Ms. Lisa Hsu, and Ms. Emily Chang. To find out more about your representatives, please call the Diocese offices at (02) 2341-1265.



Johanneans 7th World Reunion— Singapore

by Erin Weber-Johnson

Members of the St. John's Alumni Association traveled to Singapore April 26 through April 30, 2006 to take part in the Johanneans 7th World Reunion.

Twenty-eight members represented the Taiwan chapter of Johanneans in meetings and celebrations that took place on the Super Star Virgo cruise ship. The Right Reverend David J. H. Lai, Bishop of the Taiwan Episcopal

Church, and wife Lily Lai, President Dr. Peter Yang and wife Pauline, and fellow trustees from St. John's University, Tamshui helped to make up the Taiwan contingent. In all there were well over 400 participants in attendance from all over the globe. Members present traveled from as far away as Canada, the United States of America, China, and Taiwan. The event was planned and put on by the Hong Kong Chapter of the Alumni Association. Members were given ample time to rekindle old friendships and to form new relationships while being treated to a cruise to Malaysia.

Many thought it remarkable that so many people from all over the world were joined together under one



(Above) Taiwan Johanneans share a meal, (Below) the famous Merlion in the Singapore harbor



tives from St. John's University, Tamshui to celebrate with their fellow alumni from St. John's University, Shanghai this monumental development in the history of the school. The next Johannean World Reunion will take place in Shanghai in 2008.

roof remembering, honoring, and celebrating the glory times and fine traditions of their alma mater. It served as proof of the St. John University Alumni's steadfast loyalty that they would both travel to and participate in this reunion. St.

John's University started in Shanghai in 1879 under the direction of Bishop S.I.J. Schereschewsky of the Episcopal Church USA. After closing in 1952, the school reopened in Tamshui in 1967, still affiliated with the Episcopal Church, as Xinpü Junior College, which later became St. John's and St. Mary's Institute of Technology. In August of 2005, St John's and St. Mary's Institute of Technology passed the rigorous tests needed to upgrade to a university of technology in Taiwan. The Johanneans 7th World Reunion became the first opportunity for alumni and representa-

Help Wanted!

If you or someone you know is interested in serving the Diocese of Taiwan through English communication, by publishing the English quarterly newsletter "*Friendship*" and maintaining correspondence with the national church, please contact Bishop David Lai at (02) 2341-1265.

St. John's University sponsors service learning trip to Seattle



SJU students at a "Habitat" build site

On January 19th seven students, one faculty, and two staff members from St. John's University traveled to Seattle, Washington for a five day service-learning experience. The trip was arranged through St. John University's Office of Technology Cooperation which oversees the development of international and domestic partnerships between St. John's and other institutions. The focus of the trip was to engage some of St. John's brightest and best student leaders in the areas of service and community outreach. In order to fulfill their goals of putting the students in contact with resources and experiences in these areas, the Office of Technology Cooperation, through the leadership of Ms. Erin Weber-Johnson, Section Leader for Interna-

tional Cooperation, worked with a variety of Seattle area not-for-profit organizations, and ministries focusing on community service.

In order to qualify for this trip students had to meet a number of requirements. Applicants needed to show a high level of academic achievement, leadership both inside and outside the classroom, a dedication to their community, an interest and demonstrated history in service, and a proficiency in English. Of the more than thirty students who applied, the seven finalists were chosen from across St. John University's different degree programs and from both the graduate and undergraduate schools. Upon returning from the trip, the group was required to synthesize their experience into a curriculum for teaching servant leadership through St. John's University. Their recorded



Meeting with former Governor Gary Locke



Sharing thoughts on faith with Bishop Warner

experiences will aid in furthering the University's goal of holistic education for all students. On the intensive five day experience in Seattle students engaged with community and church leaders, met with owners of non-profit businesses, and participated in a number of service projects. As St. John University is a school affiliated with the Episcopal Church, many of the arrangements were made with the Episcopal Diocese in Western Washington (the Diocese of Olympia) which is headquartered in Seattle. The students met with the Diocesan Bishop of Olympia, the Right Reverend Vincent Warner. Warner discussed issues of faith and leadership and encouraged the students to take a greater roll in their communities upon returning to Taiwan. The group toured Renton Salvation Army Food Bank with an eye turned to the organiza-

tions structure, facilities, and distribution methods. The students met with members of Farestart, a restaurant and catering company that seeks to train homeless men and women in the food and service industry. Students sought out salespersons from Real Change, an alternative newspaper operated and sold by area homeless men and women. This experience gave students a firsthand opportunity to meet with someone who not only worked for the program, but was also benefiting from the program. A morning service project filling packages bound for children in Iraq, a meeting with former Washington State Governor Gary Locke to discuss community service in its many facets, touring a build site operated by Habitat for Humanity, and another service project assisting an area men's homeless shelter to serve meals rounded out the trip.



Bilingual Eucharist in honor of the SJU visitors

("UNCSW"... *cont'd. from p. 1*) 38 provinces worldwide and also from the Episcopal Church USA. The gradual increase of female representatives made women have better self-awareness and further participation in church and society, especially participation in decision-making processes. This is really like a mustard seed that will one day become a tree for people to rest under. The issue of gender equality is not only about women, it is also closely linked with men.

Thirdly, in the Beijing Platform for Action, the highest criterion for the UN women's issues, it is clearly written that women should possess 30% of the seats in decision-making groups. The resolution of The Anglican Consultative Council meeting of 2005 also for the first time used gender terms to encourage women's equal participation in decision making processes. Can we imagine or picture what this might look like? The numbers below can be a referenced to us. In the union of four Anglican worldwide organizations; the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primates of 38 provinces, 700 Bishops and commissary of the ACC, there are only 30 women in this more than 800 Anglican Church leaders and decision makers group. What a beautiful and different picture it will be when the church committee members are not all men; when sisters can also participate in God's work and share the burdens of brothers to discern God's will and guidance! On the other hand, female church leaders or decision makers should not neglect their gifts from God, which are often totally different from our brothers, and believe that God needs their participation in His work.

Fourthly, in the service of celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the UNCSW, female representatives of

Anglican churches, under the theme of "Transforming Vision into Action", shared and discussed in a "Beijing Circle" meeting how to transform our vision into action, via education, sharing, faith reflection and women's support in the UN to put what we've seen into effect for individuals (or groups). In this meeting, we saw the importance of education for young people to be esteemed and cultivated. It is worth learning that many young female representatives are in this meeting, even some high school students participated in the UN meetings, and their opinions are highly affirmed and admired. We always think that young people are not mature enough, so they cannot attend important meetings and express their viewpoints. But, in this meeting, I found it important to give opportunity to young people for more participation, so they may learn to expand their vision and be more forward thinking.

Finally, another benefit I've taken from this meeting is the witness of unity in the Anglican Churches. Ever since the Episcopal Church USA accepted Gene Robinson, a homosexual priest to be ordained Bishop of New Hampshire, and since the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster in Canadian British Columbian began blessing same-sex marriages, the unity of the Anglican Communion has been seriously tested. However, in this woman's gathering of worldwide Anglican Churches, we see that there is still a lot for us to learn from each other. We cherished this precious short meeting and realized that we should learn more deeply in the theme of loving one another in accepting, understanding, sharing and listening.



New 'soul food' restaurant opens outside of Chiayi

If you happen to be driving in Min Shong County some afternoon outside of Chiayi, and you catch a waft of good home cooking drifting through your window, you might smell the newest "soul food" in Taiwan. On March 1st, 2006, Mr. Huang, Zhu Guo and his wife Mrs. Chien, Li Shu opened their restaurant Zhuen Mei Chi, "Good Food and God's Grace". The menu consists of traditional Taiwan treats like dumplings, soup, noodles and a little helping of faith. Adapting the shield from the Taiwan Episcopal Church into their storefront signage was just one way that this couple tried to infuse their new establishment with a truly Christian flavor. On February 28th, the night before the restaurant was to open members from St. Peter's Church, Chiayi, led by Rector Rev. Keith Lee visited the new establishment for a time of family worship and a liturgy of blessing. (*cont'd. on p. 7*)

Taiwan Episcopal Church holds annual diocesan meeting in Tainan

About seventy-five members represented parishes from the Taiwan Diocese in the Synod meeting held on February 17th and 18th, 2006. Priests, Lay ministers, Deacons, Evangelists, and representatives were in attendance for this 2-day, 1 night event held at Grace Church in Tainan. Also in attendance were special visitors from the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, the Anglican-Episcopal Church in Japan. Bishop James Toru Uno, his wife, two diocesan representatives, and a translator from the Diocese of Osaka traveled to Taiwan to join in the fellowship and grow together through shared common experience. The Diocese of Osaka and the Diocese of Taiwan signed a partnership in October of 2005. This visit was a symbol of that cooperation as both dioceses strive to be in deeper communion with one another.

One topic of special note during the meeting was the furthering of the Taiwan Diocese's Mission: Shining through the light of the Lord. Mission Churches were encouraged to equip parishioners to better pursue the will of God through the knowledge of Scripture. Church exams will now be given the first Sunday of every

season. The first exam included 24 individuals with scores given from 1-3. After the results of the first exam, the test has been reformatted from fill in the blank to multiple choice questions. The next exam will be June 4th.

The next synod meeting will be held in Chiayi at St. Peter's Church. The standing Committee will decide next week as to the official dates.



Clergy take a moment to pose together

Also, the development of a special training center for Spiritual Equipping is under way. The center will be located in Tainan at St. Michael's. Both the northern and southern dioceses will utilize its faculties for camps, retreats, and spiritual training.

The Senate meeting was a successful event. The visitors from Japan shared positive feedback with the Taiwan

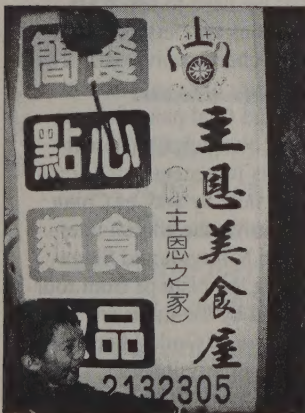
Diocese. They noted that

the Taiwan Synod was joyful and of good spirit together. Additionally, compliments were given to President Dr. Peter Yang, of St. John's University in Tamshui for being in attendance and being in participation with the Diocese of Taiwan. Also noted was the number of young members involved in the Diocese and the number of women (Currently Taiwan has three) serving as Priests in our Diocese.

("soul food cont'd from p. 6) Rev. Lee is a big fan of the new restaurant and in particular of the couple that is running it. "They are very dedicated to their faith and to the Church of St. Peter where they attend. They hope to share the good new from their selling food", says Lee.

The interior of the restaurant is decorated with photos of members of St. Peter's Church, taken during church functions and activities. Free Christian periodicals are available to customers. It is the desire of the couple that their restaurant will not only be serving up traditional Taiwanese foods, but will also be a way for them to evangelize their neighbors.

Pictured right is the store's new sign. Note the use of the Taiwan Episcopal Church shield in the upper-right corner



Four Anglican dioceses share Chinese clergy retreat in Malaysia

by Rev. Lennon Chang

This year the clergy retreat for the Taiwan Diocese was located in the Cameron Highlands, in West Malaysia with fifteen clergy attending. The Cameron highlands are located at 1,200 meters above sea level. Each year after Easter the Anglican Church in West Malaysia and Singapore will have their Anglican Chinese clergy retreat. The retreat alternates between the two dioceses, with one hosting one year, and the other the next. This year the Episcopal Diocese of Taiwan was invited along with the Diocese of Kuchin (Eastern Malaysia) to join them. Sixty clergy in all represented the four separate dioceses. The time was April 18-21st. The main topic for the retreat was "Sixth dimensional vision". The main speaker was a Methodist minister, Reverend Yang, Zhong Lu.

On the morning of April 16th at 6:30 the fifteen members of our group gathered at Chiang Kai Chek International Airport. The week prior we had all been busy with the activities of Holy Week and Easter Day celebration in our home parishes. We were surprised that we still had energy to meet. We flew into Penang, Malaysia that afternoon. We visited three Episcopal/Anglican Churches; Christ Church, St. Paul's Church, and St. George's Church and received their hospitality until that evening.

The next day, in the morning at 9:00 we separated into two groups according to age and spend about four and a half hours traveling by bus to the Heritage Hotel in the Cameron Highlands. We were relieved to arrive and were able to relax for a moment during an informal tea time, getting to know the other clergy who had already gathered. One clergyman from West Malaysia, Fr. Lin Guo Xin had spent a year as a priest in the Diocese of Taiwan, some thirty years ago. I was surprised to find that he still had all of his jet black hair with no gray just as he did thirty years ago. Fr. Lin Guo Xin spoke to the gathered clergy during the retreat on the topic of "Old Man and Evangelism". He asked us to bring his hello's back to the Diocese of Taiwan. In his speech he mentioned that during the year 2002 there were 640 million elderly people (people over 60 years old) in the world. Looking to the year 2050 he predicted that there will be more than double that amount at approximately 2 billion elderly. He remarked that each nation will become an "elderly" country, with over 6 percent of each nation's population over the age of 60. He added that Taiwan will be one of these nations. His point was that our priorities in ministry and in life would need to shift toward a focus on the elderly and their needs. Fr. Lin Guo Xin reminded us that elderly people are, among other things, have lots of free time, are available to visit others (especially the sick and shut-in), are active in their prayer lives, and are invested in the lives of their clergy. His argument was that our churches should organize fellowship for and a fixed time to meet with and teach positive thinking to the elderly in our congregations. These times of fellowship should draw the members to see their own weakness, to recognize that weakness in light of God's grace, to see others needs and recognize their responsibility to those in need. If we can do these things, he argued, then our evangelism to society can be more effective.

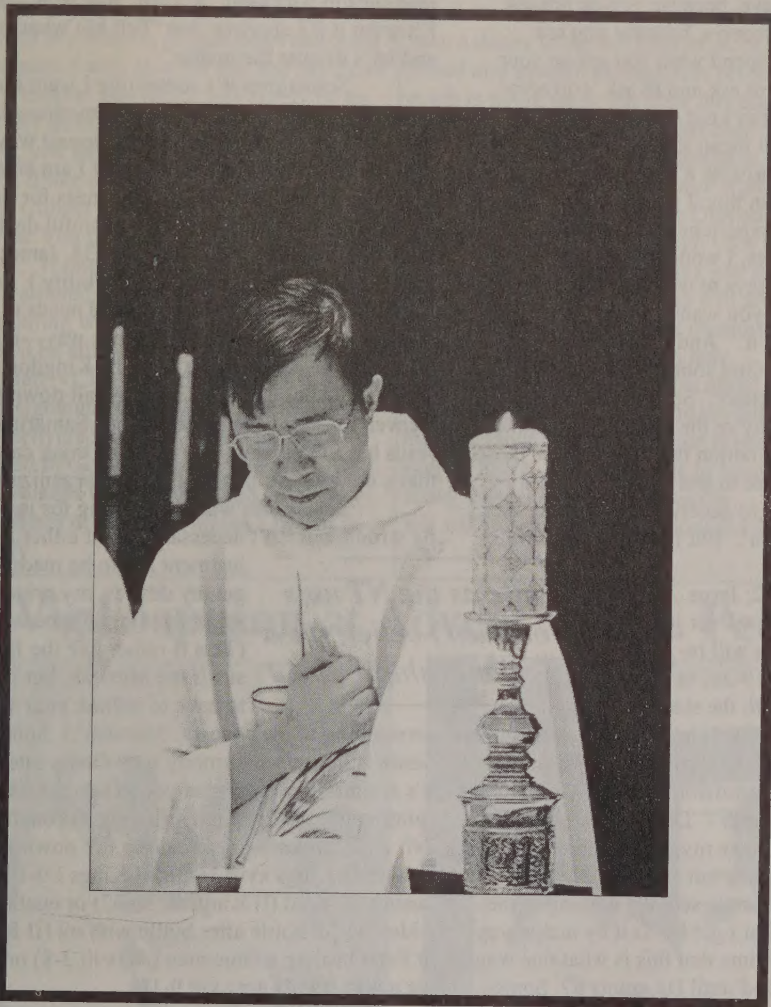
During his speaking, Reverend Yang, Zhong Lu he asked us whether the Chinese church around the world should actively engage in or emphasize the evangelism of non-believers in response to the Great Commission. Citing Matthew 10: 36-38, he talked about the harvest being great while there are few workers. He said that a man with vision is a man who can see what God sees. He reminded us that we have to see in six dimensions in order to see God's vision in its fullest complexity. The first two dimensions are "inside" and "outside", meaning our ability to see what is happening globally within and outside the church universal. The second pair of dimensions are "front" and "back" which call us to look back on our history of evangelism in the church, and to look to the future at what is emerging within the church. The third and final pair of dimensions are "down" and "up" which call us to listen to those who are lost, sinking in their own despair (down) and also to offer an accounting for the work we have done, leaving it before God and his judgment.

On April 21st early in the morning we drove to the Kuala Lumpur Airport and flew by way of China Airlines back to Taipei. After this retreat we had our eyes open to what is happening within the church internationally and were better understand what is happening within the Chinese churches in Malaysia and Singapore. We experienced the friendship between the Chinese clergy in our region. Hearing the bishops from four dioceses share what work is happening was a blessing for all of us. I was further blessed by the times we spent in praise and worship as the voices of four dioceses lifted together in love and praise of God. I hope our evangelism to the society in Taiwan can be elevated to the next level, and that we can send missionaries abroad with strategy and planning to join in the global missionary movement.

Picture Taiwan

Have mercy

by John Chen



*'O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.*

*O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.*

*O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.'*

(Book of Common Prayer, Holy Eucharist I)

Faith and Petitionary Prayer

by Steven Schaufele, Ph. D.

At the beginning of the 4th chapter of his epistle, St. James writes, 'You covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures.' One has to ask and to ask 'correctly'; asking 'wrongly' doesn't cut the mustard.

What does it mean to ask 'correctly'? As a newly-committed Christian a little over 30 years ago, I wondered a lot about this; I gather a lot of thoughtful (but relatively inexperienced?) Christians do the same. And sometimes, I wondered if what it really meant was that God says to us 'Oh, yeah, sure, you can ask for anything you want; but you'll only get it if I want you to have it.' And I wasn't happy about that because it made God sound too much like a capricious parent or dictator. Some Christians aren't bothered by that—they're the kind who are quite comfortable with the notion that 'God put all those fossils in the rocks just to test our faith', meaning 'God is quite willing to deceive us by putting trick questions on the exam'. But it didn't sit too well with me.

Matt. xxii 22, Jesus says, 'Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.' In Matt. xvii 19-20, he says, 'If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will be able to say to a mountain, "Move from here to there", and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.' What does it mean to 'ask with faith'? Does it mean that, if I, by an effort of will, make myself *believe*—totally convince myself, driving out any possibility of doubt—that what I want is actually coming to me, that will guarantee that I get it? Is it by making up one's mind ahead of time that this is what one wants and then pestering God until He grants it? Sometimes this works (Luke xi 5-8, xviii 1-5); ours is an indulgent God. In my experience, what more typically happens is that, as one asks for something repeatedly while striving to attune oneself to the Kingdom of God, God gradually manages to adapt, remold one's desire until it conforms to His will. And then—only then—can it be granted. So if one starts out demanding the means to pay for a new décor for one's bedroom, if one is sincerely seeking to become attuned to God, that desire may become something else.

"...faith, as the NT uses the word, isn't belief; it's a relationship."

Because faith, as the NT uses the word, isn't belief; it's a relationship. And petitionary prayer, like all prayer, should be an opportunity to cultivate one's relationship with God. It's not 'Ask what you like and I'll grant it if I approve' but 'Tell Me what you want and let's discuss the matter.'

Sometimes it's something I want but which would be wrong for me to have; sometimes I already know this, in which case the only *honest* way for me to deal with the matter is to admit that I am entertaining a sinful desire and to receive forgiveness for that. (If one isn't sincerely willing to repent of sinful desires, well, 'God opposes the proud' (Prov. iii 34, James iv 6); there's no point pursuing that possibility.) Sometimes, I'm a little obtuse about it, and God needs to explain to me—in His usual gentle, humorous way—that what I'm asking for is incompatible with the Kingdom (In Luke ix 53-55, James and John want to call down fire from Heaven to destroy some obnoxious Samaritans, and Jesus has to tell them, 'Boys, boys, think carefully; that's not how we do things in this organization!')

Sometimes what I'm asking for isn't necessarily wrong, but isn't necessarily right either, and an adjustment has to be made in order to get my desires, my priorities, my understanding in tune with Reality. (This is rather like the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, but you're going to have to rethink your whole un-

derstanding of the concept 'Messiah'.) Sometimes my desire is in perfect harmony with God's intention, and it's at times like these that you get things like Moses splitting the sea or Elijah inflicting a drought (I Kings xvii 1; cf. James v 17) or calling fire down from Heaven (I Kings xviii 36-38; II Kings I 9-15) or Elisha raising the dead (II Kings iv 32-37) or enabling a poor widow to fill bottle after bottle with oil (II Kings iv 2-6) or Peter healing a lame man (Acts iii 2-8) or Paul striking a man blind (Acts xiii 9-11).

In the Last Supper discourse recorded in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus repeatedly (John xiv 14, xv 16, xvi 23) assures His disciples, 'If you ask anything in My Name, it shall be granted'. How does one ask 'in Jesus' Name'? Is it merely by reciting the formula 'in Jesus' Name'? No. I would say that it means to ask in the *spirit* of Jesus—to ask with one's heart and mind and soul totally attuned to the Will of God, as His always was.

(cont'd. on p. 11)

(“Faith & Prayer” cont’d from p. 10)

Note that, immediately after Jesus says ‘If you ask for anything in My Name I will do it’, He says ‘If you love Me, you will keep My commandments’ (John xiv 15). I doubt very much that this is an accident. What is really being said here—at least, as regards petitionary prayer—is, I think, beautifully summed up in John xv 7: ‘If you abide in Me and My Words abide in you – if you are suffused through and through with My Nature, if your heart and mind are totally permeated with love for Me and My Love for you, then whatever you desire will surely be an expression of My desire for you, and it will be *so easy* to grant it; you have only to stretch out your hand and pluck it like a ripe plum from a tree.’

In the Collect for Proper 25 it says ‘that we may obtain what You promise, make us love what You command.’ If one’s heart and mind and soul are thoroughly attuned to God, all pulling together, then indeed ‘nothing will be impossible’. But FIRST you must be attuned to the Will of God. As Jesus says in Matt. vi 33: ‘Set your hearts *first* on the Kingdom and Righteousness of God; then all other things will be delivered to you.’ When all of one’s psyche is attuned to God, *then* one’s will is the Will of God, one’s voice is the Voice of God, one’s desires are the Desires of God, and all the Cosmos rejoices to comply.

A Note from the Editor

This will be the final *Friendship* edition that I will have the pleasure to edit for the Diocese of Taiwan. Erin and I will be leaving Taiwan in just over two weeks for me to attend seminary in the fall. You may note from the “advertisement” on page 4 that the Diocese will be looking for someone to continue on publishing this newsletter. Please do take it in to consideration if you have a desire to do this kind of work. I have been surprised and amazed through this project by just how much is going on in this little diocese. It seems there is never a dull moment in the building of God’s kingdom.

I will take an indulgence as the editor of this paper to add a personal farewell from both myself and from Erin to all of you in the Diocese of Taiwan who have touched our lives through your generosity of spirit, and in the tangible ways you supported us here during this past year. Taiwan will always remain as a special place and time in our memories, and we hope that we will be able to return here.

If you have questions about editing *Friendship*, or about what Erin’s and my plans are for the immediate (and distant future), or if you simply want to keep in touch, we would love to hear from you at Jered_weberjohnson@yahoo.com.

We will miss you and this diocese a lot! Blessings to you!

Easter Vigil baptisms at Advent and St. Peter’s



(Above Left) Mr. and Mrs. Lin of St. Peter’s Church offer their new baby daughter for baptism. Bishop John Chien presided. Also pictured is Rev. Keith Lee. (Right) St. John’s University graduate student Stoney Wu of Advent Episcopal Church in Xintu was also baptized.



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The Episcopal
Diocese of Taiwan

The Rt. Rev. David Lai,
Bishop

Many thanks to

Ms. Christina Hai and
Mr. Daniel Chen for
their help in translating
many of these articles!

Happy Easter!

Diocese of Taiwan
+David Lai

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